

LAW VERSUS GRACE (3)

When Dr. Chafer introduced his book, he wrote these words: “This book is affectionately dedicated to the late Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, D.D., for many years my friend, counselor, teacher, who in his generation excelled as champion and exponent of grace.” If God will grant us just a measure of understanding of His grace that those two men had, this study will not be in vain.

QUESTION #1 – Is there any Biblical evidence that suggests there is a major distinction between God’s law system and God’s grace system?

As we open the pages of Scripture, we may answer dogmatically Yes! There is an overwhelming abundance of Scriptural evidence. There are nine specific passages that clearly suggest this:

(Passage #1) - John 1:16-17

This text very clearly states that a new system of operation was instituted by Jesus Christ Himself.

(Passage #2) - Acts 15:1-11

As we have already suggested, this was a major theological decision that needed to be made in the early days of the church and the decision was, there was a major difference between law and grace.

(Passage #3) - Romans 6:14

This is a point-blank statement about the law given to believers who have been identified with Jesus Christ.

(Passage #4) - Romans 7:6

This text not only demonstrates a major difference between two systems of theology, but also a major difference between two lifestyles.

(Passage #5) - Romans 11:5-6

It is very clear that at the present time we are in a time of pure grace that cannot contain any mixture of works, even law works.

(Passage #6) - Galatians 1:6

It is very clear that any Gospel that is not pure grace is another gospel, not the one Paul taught. There can be absolutely no mixture of law in grace.

(Passage #7) - Galatians 3:19-29

The teaching is that the law did have a purpose, to bring us to Christ who sets us free from the law.

(Passage #8) - Ephesians 2:8-9

This makes it very clear that we are saved by a total grace system, not one of works.

(Passage #9) - Colossians 2:14

This text clearly states that Christ nailed the law to His cross, canceling out the law debt.

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There is without question much Biblical justification for saying there is a major distinction between law and grace according to God and that we need to understand those distinctions.

QUESTION #2 – Why is an understanding of law versus grace so important?

In this Church Age, it is important that we understand the differences between law and grace for at least three Biblical reasons:

(Reason #1) - Galatians 1:6-9

Because not understanding the doctrine of the pure grace of God versus the law of God means one may pervert the Gospel and actually teach another gospel of a different kind, which is a very serious matter in the mind of God that contains a very serious warning “let him be accursed.” To not know that justification is by pure grace, not by any law-works (**Gal. 2:16**), is a very serious theological violation and distortion of truth.

(Reason #2) - Galatians 5:1-4

Because not understanding the distinctions between law versus grace means one may actually live life in such a state of theological error that he actually tampers with the wonderful grace given by Jesus Christ. Confusion on law versus grace means confusion about Christ’s finished work and the freedom that He gives through that finished work. A believer could potentially live his or her entire life under law and never experience the freedom and work and development of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Roy Aldrich said, “The most persistent and widespread and deadly error of all Bible history is legalism. The natural mind has an affinity for legalism and corresponding disaffection for grace” (*Causes for Confusion of Law and Grace*, Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. 116, p. 221, 1958).

(Reason #3) - I Timothy 1:3-11

Because not understanding law versus grace means one will not blossom in doctrine that is sound and it will curtail one’s ability to recognize false teachers and their unsound, false doctrine. If you do not understand the difference between law versus grace, you are susceptible to teaching that is not good, true and healthy.

A failure to understand distinctions between law and grace leads to theological disaster. Dr. Charles Ryrie said, “...the concept of grace is the watershed that divides Roman Catholicism from Protestantism, Calvinism from Arminianism, modern liberalism from conservatism” (*The Grace of God*, p. 11).

It is very clear from these three passages that an understanding of law and grace is extremely important in the mind of God for Doctrine, for Evangelism, and for Spirituality.

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QUESTION #3 – Why has there been such a misunderstanding or lack of understanding concerning this very doctrinal matter of law versus grace?

Since we have already established that this doctrinal matter is critical and weighty in the mind of God, one would wonder why there has been such a lack of understanding on this issue. We would begin with the supposition that if the matter is critical to the mind of God, we may expect a great lack of comprehension for three main reasons:

(Reason #1) - Because of Satan. **I Tim. 4:1-4**

Satan and his demonic forces particularly are out to deceive people from understanding the pure grace of God by confusing them with works and law-works. As Dr. Aldrich said, “Satan’s masterwork consists of those deceived by his systems of self-righteousness” (*Ibid.*, p. 221). Satan transforms himself into an “angel of light” and promotes a “works righteousness” system, which is clearly taught by the Apostle Paul (**II Cor. 11:14-15**). We may know without a doubt that behind all confusion of law versus grace are Satan and his demons. They religiously promote people establishing their own righteousness based on law-works, rather than understanding grace righteousness freely given by God (**Rom. 10:3**).

(Reason #2) - Because of ignorant and arrogant and unregenerate teachers. **I Tim. 1:7**

Dr. Chafer said that the reason for such a lack in understanding law versus grace is because the world is being led by blind, religious leaders (*Grace, The Glorious Theme*, p. vii-xiv). There is a rift of teachers and preachers who carry Bibles, who love to teach and wax eloquent concerning law principles and some of those teachers even try to put God’s people back under the law principles. Those who do this have no grasp of true theology and are ignorant, arrogant or unregenerate.

It is no wonder God’s people have been confused, for they have been taught by confused teachers. For example, P. B. Fitzwater (1871-1957), a theologian in the early 1900’s who had a hodgepodge of theology from Moody Bible Institute to Princeton Theological Seminary to Xenia Theological Seminary, said, “Grace has in no sense superceded law” (*Systematic Theology*, p. 9). William B. Pope said, “Christians should recite the commandments (as their creeds) to keep in memory what they must do to enter into life” (*A Compendium of Christian Theology*, Vol. 3. p. 174). It is no wonder that people are confused, they have listened to confused teachers.’

This teacher sat next to a minister on a place who taught legal mandates of the law to his people and admitted to me that he had never even taken his flock through one book of the Bible in seven years of ministry. He had absolutely no idea as to what he even believed and yet he actually bragged that he was a “highly paid minister.” One day he will be eternally paid by God.